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ON THE FOOD OF ANIMALS, IN CONNEXION WITH THEIR HABITS.

THE DOG, when in a state of nature, approaches very near to the wolf. Wild dogs will unite in packs, and attack even the lion or the tiger; they assist each other in pursuing the prey, which, when hunted down, they share together. Even in the domestic state, they sometimes spontaneously go in company to hunt; and, when they have killed any large animal, one returns with the intelligence to his master, while the others keep guard over the spoil. "I was an eye-witness to an occurrence of this kind," says Lichtenstein,* at the farm of M. Meiburg, on the Eerste River, where, in my presence, a dog ran up to his master, and made him understand by his movements that something was caught. The dogs were counted over, and it was found that two more were absent; this was a sufficient indication, that they had gone spontaneously upon a hunting party. We followed the dog; and, in about three quarters of an hour, came to the spot where the two others were lying, with a slain antelope. They had bitten it in the throat, and had regaled themselves with licking up the blood as it flowed from the wound. The entrails were immediately taken out, and given to the hunters as their reward." We learn from Sparrman, that the *wild dogs* near the Cape are very destructive to sheep and goats, and do great damage to the flocks of the Hottentots. Even

* Travels in Africa.

in England, dogs which have been deserted, and in consequence become wild, have proved extremely destructive. In the first volume of Daniel's Rural Sports, several instances of this nature are related. "In 1784, a dog which was left by a smuggling cutter, near Boomer, on the Northumberland coast, became the terror of the country, for more than twenty miles around. When he hunted down a sheep, he eat no more, it was asserted, than the fat about the kidneys, so that one sheep per day was not sufficient for his sustenance. He was frequently pursued by hunting parties; but still escaped, by lying down upon his back, supplicating as it were for mercy. When the hounds came up to him in this position, they never touched him; nor did they follow, on his getting up, till again excited by the huntsmen. On one occasion, he was hunted thirty miles; and yet returned to the same place, and killed sheep that evening. His constant residence was upon a rock, on the Heugh Hill, near Howick; where he had a view of four roads that approached it; and there, in March, 1785, after many fruitless attempts, he was at last shot."

When domesticated, the Dog will eat almost any thing. The Kamtchatkans and Greenlanders turn their dogs loose, during the summer, to provide for themselves, when they live chiefly on berries and muscles. In Guiana, they live principally on crabs, and hence are named *Crab Dogs*. In the South Sea Islands, where dogs are eaten, the natives stuff them with vegetables, as the Europeans cram turkeys, for the purpose of fattening them. The abstinence which the Dog can support, is very considerable. Buffon mentions one which had been forgotten in a country-house, and which lived forty days on the wool of an old mattress: but the following narrative is still more remarkable:—

In 1789, when preparations were making at St. Paul's for the reception of His Majesty, a favourite bitch followed its master up the dark stairs of the dome; here, all at once it was missing, and calling and whistling were to no purpose. Nine weeks after this, all but two days, some glaziers were at work in the cathedral, and heard amongst the timbers which support the dome, a faint noise. Thinking it might be some unfortunate human being, they tied a rope round a boy, and let him down near to the place whence the sound came. At the bottom, he found a dog lying on its side, the skeleton of another dog, and an old shoe half eaten. The humanity of the boy led him to rescue the animal from its miserable situation, and it was accordingly drawn up. Much emaciated, and scarce able to stand, the workmen placed it in the porch of the church, to die or live, as it might happen. This was about ten o'clock in the morning. Some time after, the dog was seen endeavouring to cross the street, at the top of Ludgate Hill; but her weakness was so great, that, unsupported

by a wall, she could not accomplish it. The miserable appearance of the dog again excited the compassion of a boy, who carried it over. By the aid of the houses, it was enabled to get to Fleet Market, and over two or three narrow crossings, in its way to Holborn Bridge; and, about eight o'clock in the evening, it reached its master's house in Red Lion Street, Holborn, and laid itself down on the steps, having been ten hours in its journey from St. Paul's to that place. The dog was so much altered, the eyes being sunk in the head as to be scarce discernible, that the master would not encourage his old faithful companion; who, when lost, was supposed to weigh twenty pounds, and now only weighed three pounds fourteen ounces. The first indication it gave of knowing its master, was by wagging the tail, when he mentioned the name Phillis. For a long time, it was unable to eat or drink; and it was kept alive by the sustenance it received from its mistress, who used to feed it with a tea-spoon: at length, it recovered. Should it be asked, how did this animal live near nine weeks without food? This was not the case. She was in whelp when lost, and doubtless eat her offspring; the remains of another dog, killed by a similar fall, was likewise found—that most probably was converted by the survivor to the most urgent of all natural purposes; and when this treat was done, the shoe succeeded, which was almost half devoured. What famine and a thousand accidents could not do, was effected a short time after by the wheels of a coach, which unfortunately went over her, and ended the mortal days of poor Phillis.—*Daniel's Rural Sports*, i. 28—30.

We shall now advert to the WOLF (*Canis Lupus*), than which no animal is more branded for cruelty and rapine; and yet, owing to the persecution of mankind, it is said often to die of hunger. In these islands, he has been extirpated; and, in most parts of Europe, has been driven from the vicinity of human abodes, to find a precarious subsistence in the depth of the forest, or in the solitude of the mountains. It frequently happens, however, that being pinched by extreme hunger, he assumes a degree of desperate courage; and leaving his retreats, especially in the night, he boldly roams over the country, putting to death every animal he meets, not excepting even the human species. He often enters sheep-folds by undermining the door; and then, not contented with satisfying his hunger, he puts every living creature within to death. When a wolf becomes sickly, or is badly wounded, the others fall upon and devour him. It has been asserted, that nothing but a wolf will eat a wolf. In Colonel Thornton's Sporting Tour, however, an account is given of one killed in France, which the English dogs devoured without reluctance, though the French dogs would not taste it. The mother is very careful of her young, and brings them leverets, partridges, and fowls, alive: these the young ones first play with, and then worry; after which, the mother

plucks off the feathers, and divides the flesh among them. Wolves are fond of water; and, when supplied with it, often pass four or five days without food. According to Pennant, they are often so poor and hungry as to go into a swamp, and fill themselves with mud; which they disgorge, on again falling in with prey. The manners and dispositions of the other species of wolves resemble those of the common, and do not require particular comment.

The HYÆNA equals the wolf in rapacity, and excels him in boldness and strength; he will carry off a man to the distance of two leagues without stopping, and defends himself even against the lion. He follows the flocks, breaks open the doors of sheep-folds and other enclosures, and tears the dead from their graves. Mr. Bruce had ample opportunities of studying the manners of the Abyssinian Hyæna (*Canis Æthiopicus*), of which an interesting account may be found in his travels.

They were (he says) a plague in Abyssinia, in every situation, both in the city and in the field; and, I think, surpassed the sheep in number. Gondar was full of them, from the time it turned dark till the dawn of day, seeking the different pieces of slaughtered carcases, which this cruel and unclean people expose in the streets without burial; and who firmly believe these animals are Falasha, from the neighbouring mountains, transformed by magic, and come down to eat human flesh in the dark in safety. Many a time in the night, when the king had kept me late in the palace, and it was not my duty to be there, in going across the square from the king's house, not many hundred yards distant, I have been apprehensive they would bite me in the leg. They grunted in great numbers about me, though I was surrounded with several armed men, who seldom passed a night without wounding or slaughtering some of them. One night in Maitsha, being very intent on observation, I heard something pass behind me towards the bed; but, upon looking round, could perceive nothing. Having finished what I was then about, I went out of my tent, resolving directly to return, which I did, when I perceived two large blue eyes glaring at me in the dark. I called upon my servant with a light; and there was the hyæna standing nigh the head of the bed, with two or three large bunches of candles in his mouth. To have fired at him, I was in danger of breaking my quadrant, or other furniture; and he seemed, by keeping the candles steadily in his mouth, to wish for no other prey at that time. As his mouth was full, and he had no claws to tear with, I was not afraid of him, but with a pike struck him as near the heart as I could judge. It was not till then he showed any sign of fierceness; but, upon feeling his wound, he let drop the candles, and endeavoured to run up the shaft of the spear to arrive at me; so that, in self-defence, I was obliged to draw a pistol from my girdle, and shoot him; and, nearly at the same time, my servant cleft his skull with a battle-axe. In a word, the hyæna was the plague of our lives, the terror of our night-walks,

and the destruction of our mules and asses, which above all others are his favourite food.

The JACKAL, (*Canis aureus*) according to Buffon, "unites the impudence of the dog with the cowardice of the wolf; and participating of the nature of each, seems to be an odious creature, composed of all the bad qualities of both." It inhabits most of the warm parts of Asia and Barbary; lurks during the day among the woods and mountains, and at night wanders over the country, often in packs of 200, devouring small animals, birds, and fruits; but their most favourite repast consists of putrid carcasses, especially human bodies. They follow armies; and graves, however deep, do not protect the dead from their ravages. In countries where jackals are numerous, the inhabitants are obliged to stick the earth of the graves full of thorns, or cover them with large stones. The jackal is fond of leather; and steals shoes, bridles, skins, and even hats, to satisfy his vehement appetite.

The craftiness of the FOX has long been proverbial; and though much exaggerated, is still greater perhaps than that of any other quadruped. When he finds his way into a courtyard at night, he puts the whole of the poultry to death, and removes them one by one to his kennel, or hides them in the ground in different places. The fox also eats rats, mice, lizards, serpents, toads, &c. He is fond of honey, and attacks the nests of bees and wasps, which by repeated attempts he drives off. In his first essays he is repulsed, and the insects settle on him by hundreds; but he rolls himself on the ground, and crushes them to death, then returns to the charge; and thus by repeated attacks gets possession of the nest, which he devours. He is also fond of fruits, especially grapes, and does great injury to vineyards; hence, in the Song of Solomon, we read, "take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes." The manners of the other species of fox, resemble those of the common. A very curious account of the arctic fox, is given by Steller, from observations made during his stay on Behring's Island.

The next genus includes those animals which authors consider as peculiarly belonging to the carnivorous tribe of quadrupeds. The lion and tiger stand at the head of the list, and are followed by the panther, the ounce, the leopard, the tiger-cat, &c. &c.

The LION, (*Felis Leo*) conscious of his strength, will attack almost any beast of the forest. With the exception of the elephant and rhinoceros, the hippopotamus and tiger, none dares to resist him. Like all of the cat kind, he takes his prey with a spring, and at one bound can clear above fifteen

feet. He never eats carrion, except when greatly urged by hunger; and he prefers the flesh of the camel, and of the young elephant, to every other.

The TIGER (*Felis Tigris*) is larger and stronger. Like the lion, the tiger bounds with a spring upon his prey; and when once he makes it, is almost certain of success. So great is his boldness, in some parts of the East, that he will occasionally make his fatal leap among a number of men, seize the unfortunate victim whom he may have selected, and carry him off before their eyes. Such was the unhappy fate of the only son of Sir Hector Munro, in the year 1792. He was out with a shooting party of officers, on the island of Saugur, in the East Indies. They had killed a number of deer, and at about half-past three o'clock, sat down upon the end of a jungle to eat some cold meat. In a little time a roar like thunder was heard, and an immense tiger sprang upon Munro, seized him by the head, and in a moment fled with him into the thickest part of the jungle. One of the party fired a musket, upon which the tiger was seen to stagger; three more shots were fired, and then they retired from the jungle; and a few minutes after, Munro came up to them covered with blood, and fell down at their feet. He lived twenty-four hours in extreme torture, and then died. His head and scull were broken to pieces, and his neck and shoulders covered with wounds from the claws of the tiger.

The PANTHER, OUNCE, and LEOPARD inhabit the warm parts of Africa and Asia alone. They want the strength of the tiger, but equal him in cruelty and love of blood. Antelopes, cats, dogs, and other animals form their prey; but dogs are their favourite food: and in countries where these ferocious animals abound, it is almost impossible to keep a dog safe from their attacks. When urged by hunger, they will even attack mankind. Notwithstanding their voracity, however, they are constantly meagre and famished.

The Brazilian TIGER (*Felis Onca*) inhabits the whole of South America, and is even more destructive and rapacious than the three last. He grows to the size of the wolf, and when hungry is very bold; but his appetite being satisfied, he will run from a single dog. He lives entirely on prey, and prefers fish to flesh. The savages are greatly afraid of him; and it is reported by Acosta, Drake, and others, that he hunts the blacks at night by their smell; and that when a negro and a white man are sleeping near each other, he will rush with fury upon the negro, but leave the white man untouched. (The same circumstance is also reported of the leopard.) He leaps from ambush upon his prey, with three bounds, and carries away animals of thrice his own size; he will fasten

upon a horse, and often devours the crocodile. The ant-eater, though destitute of teeth, is the only quadruped, in all America, which the tiger does not attack with success : when he attempts to seize that animal, it lies down upon its back and fastens its long claws into his throat, and suffocates him.

The habits of the other species of the *cat-kind* of animals, with respect to their food, so nearly resemble those already described, that it is not necessary to particularize them. They are all carnivorous, and all are cruel ; and some of them display considerable cunning, and almost all great perseverance in taking their prey. The *Ocelot*, or *Mexican Cat*, feigns to be dead ; and when the monkeys approach, deceived by the stratagem, he springs upon and seizes them.

* * *

STANZAS,

COMPOSED AT THE KNOCKAGH, A HILL NEAR CARRICKFERGUS,

In the Summer of 1824.

HAIL, Knockagh ! rising 'mid romantic hills !
Again thy rocks and frowning cliffs I view ;
And mark the progress of the tiny rills,
Which from thy side their mazy course pursue,
Soon to be lost in yonder waters blue !
Let me recline beside this crystal stream,
And scenes of childhood and of youth renew,
When prospects rose all bright to fancy's gleam,
That have dissolved, long since, like phantoms of a dream !

Ah me ! how much are other objects changed,
Since first thy rural beauties met my sight ;
I mourn for long-lost joys—for friends estranged—
For others shrouded in the grave's long night—
For syren hope's and youth's successive flight ;
Yet, native hill ! thou art the same even now
As when I first, with young and fond delight,
Gazed on thy verdant side, and rugged brow :
Though all be changed with me, yet still unchanged art thou !

Yes ! there thou overlook'st the peaceful plain,
As I have seen thee do in former days,
As if to thee the touch of time were vain—
As if to mock the fleeting human race !
Standing with stable and majestic grace,
Whilst generations fall and are forgot,
Thou seem'st a contrast to their transient span—
Thou seem'st exempted from their mournful lot :
Whilst time o'erwhelmeth them, thee it assaileth not !

And yet thou also must submit to fate ;
Thou, with the earth and skies, shalt pass away,
Whilst man may still expect another state,
Unknown to Desolation's ruthless sway,
Unfolded by Religion's cheering ray :
Hail, view celestial ! source of purest joys !
Hence man is raised above the trodden clay,
And earthly objects lessen to his eyes,
And to the view of Faith appear as childish toys !

W. F.